AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-60 (cancelled without prejudice)

61. (new) A dry ultrasound contrast agent composition comprising:

a dry formulation comprising a saturated phospholipid, a fatty acid, and a hydrophilic stabilizer, and

SF_6,

wherein upon dissolution in an aqueous carrier liquid, the dry formulation will form a suspension of microbubbles comprising SF_6 in which the amount of saturated phospholipid in the suspension is less than about 0.01% by weight.

62. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the fatty acid is present in an amount of between 1% and 50% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid.

63. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the fatty acid is present in an amount of between 5% and 25% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid.

64. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the fatty acid is present in an amount of between 10% and 15% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid.

65. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the fatty acid is a C_{12}-C_{24} straight chain saturated fatty acid selected from the group consisting of lauric acid, myristic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, arachidic acid, behenic acid, lignoceric acid and mixtures thereof.

66. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the fatty acid comprises palmitic acid in an amount of between 10% and 15% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid.

67. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the saturated phospholipid is selected from the group consisting of dimyristoylphosphatidic acid, dimyristoylphosphatidylglycerol, dimyristoylphosphatidylserine, dipalmitoylphosphatidic acid, dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol, dipalmitoylphosphatidylserine, distearoylphosphatidic acid, distearoylphosphatidylglycerol, distearoylphosphatidylserine and mixtures thereof.

68. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the saturated phospholipid comprises distearoylphosphatidylcholine (DSPC) and dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol (DPPG).

69. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of any one of claims 61, 66 or 68, wherein the hydrophilic stabilizer comprises PEG 4000.

70. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 61, wherein the saturated phospholipid comprises distearoylphosphatidylcholine (DSPC) and dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol (DPPG), the fatty acid comprises palmitic acid in an amount of between 10% and 15% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid, and the hydrophilic stabilizer comprises PEG 4000.

71. (new) A method of using the dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of any one of claims 61 to 68 or 70 for the preparation of an ultrasound contrast agent comprising forming a suspension of gas filled microbubbles with the dry formulation.

72. (new) A method of preparing an ultrasound contrast agent comprising reconstituting the dry formulation of any one of claims 61 to 68 or 70 in an aqueous carrier liquid to form a suspension of gas filled microbubbles.

73. (new) A method of imaging a region of a body comprising:

(a) reconstituting the dry formulation of any one of claims 61 to 68 or 70 in an aqueous carrier liquid to form a suspension of gas filled microbubbles;

(b) administering the suspension of gas filled microbubbles to the body; and

(c) imaging the body.

74. (new) A dry ultrasound contrast agent composition comprising:

a dry formulation comprising a saturated phospholipid, a preserving agent, and a hydrophilic stabilizer, and

SF_6,

wherein the preserving agent comprises a fatty acid, and upon dissolution in an aqueous carrier liquid, the dry formulation will form a suspension of microbubbles comprising SF_6 in which the amount of saturated phospholipid in the suspension is less than about 0.01% by weight.

75. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the preserving agent is present in an amount between 1% and 50% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid.

76. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the preserving agent is present in an amount between 5% and 25% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid.

77. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the preserving agent is present in an amount between 10% and 15% by weight of the amount of the saturated saturated phospholipid.

78. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the preserving agent is a C_{12}-C_{24} straight chain saturated fatty acid selected from the group consisting of lauric acid, myristic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, arachidic acid, behenic acid, lignoceric acid and mixtures thereof.

79. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the preserving agent comprises palmitic acid in an amount between 10% and 15% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid.

80. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the saturated phospholipid is selected from the group consisting of dimyristoylphosphatidic acid, dimyristoylphosphatidylglycerol, dimyristoylphosphatidylserine, dipalmitoylphosphatidic acid, dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol, dipalmitoylphosphatidylserine, distearoylphosphatidic acid, distearoylphosphatidylglycerol, distearoylphosphatidylserine and mixtures thereof.

81. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the saturated phospholipid comprises distearoylphosphatidylcholine (DSPC) and dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol (DPPG).

82. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of any one of claims 74, 79 or 81, wherein the hydrophilic stabilizer comprises PEG 4000.

83. (new) The dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of claim 74, wherein the saturated phospholipid comprises distearoylphosphatidylcholine (DSPC) and dipalmitoylphosphatidylglycerol (DPPG), the preserving agent comprises palmitic acid in an amount between 10% and 15% by weight of the amount of the saturated phospholipid, and the hydrophilic stabilizer comprises PEG 4000.

84. (new) A method of using the dry ultrasound contrast agent composition of any one of claims 74 to 81 or 83 for the preparation of an ultrasound contrast agent comprising forming a suspension of gas filled microbubbles from the dry formulation.

85. (new) A method of preparing an ultrasound contrast agent comprising reconstituting the dry formulation of any one of claims 74 to 81 or 83 in an aqueous carrier liquid to form a suspension of gas filled microbubbles.

86. (new) A method of imaging a region of a body comprising:

(a) reconstituting the dry formulation of any one of claims 74 to 81 or 83 in an aqueous carrier liquid to form a suspension of gas filled microbubbles;

(b) administering the suspension of gas filled microbubbles to the body; and

(c) imaging the body.